

Feb 28, 2018

Public Health Committee
CT

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee, Committee,

As an advocate with Food Allergy Research & Education, I am writing to you to ask you to vote YES on HB 5158. This bill would require a restaurant's certified food protection manager(s) to complete an allergen awareness training program approved by the Department of Public Health. It also would require restaurants to include allergen awareness as part of manager's staff training; establish guidelines for the interaction of staff with customers who have food allergies; and develop procedures for informing customers, upon request, of the presence of major food allergens in its menu items.

This bill would create a more consistent dining experience for families with food allergies in Connecticut and will teach restaurant managers/staff the clear and basic information they need to know to possibly save a person with food allergies from going through a life threatening experience in their establishment.

-Food allergies are a serious growing public health problem, affecting an estimated 15 million people. In Connecticut, the prevalence of food allergies is approximately 8 percent of the population

- Research suggests that the majority of fatal food allergy reactions are triggered by food consumed outside one's home.

- According to a survey by the National Restaurant Association, 87 percent of restaurants believe food allergies are extremely important and expect increased attention to it, yet 43 percent concede they do not train their staff on food allergens.

- Researchers at Auburn University found that nearly 22 percent of managers at independent and chain indicated food allergy reactions had occurred at their restaurants in the past year.

- Currently, the revenue lost from food allergy families avoiding restaurant dining is estimated at \$45 million EACH week. Additionally, the global food market for those with food allergies is expected to grow more than \$26.5 billion over the next five years and revenue from accommodating patrons with food allergies is expected to increase 10-25 percent.

For these reasons, I ask you to vote YES on HB 5158. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rachel Avery Conley
1918 Manchester Rd
Glastonbury, CT 06033-1503
(617) 909-4919